

410 Burke Avenue
Long Beach, MS 39560
Saturday afternoon

Dear Harold,

It was so good to get your letter in this A.M.'s mail, as I was just getting ready to write you. It was a pleasure to hear your voice again the other day, and your wife, and hope all is well.

I am, in a way, shocked to hear that Ivon didn't call you back, unless he has since gotten around to it, which I now doubt. But in another way I suppose it should not surprise either of us. What does surprise me is your belief that he, in effect, looked me square in the face and lied to me. It is just so hard for me to comprehend. In all other experiences I have had with him, he has been honest and kind, and, of course, thoroughly loyal to Garrison, as was I. I have always trusted him fully, and on occasions where only unsatisfactory alternatives were available, I sought the more innocent explanation. Though it would not be the first time I have been lied to my face, and I am not naive in this respect, I still believe that it is not as bad as the obvious situation appears.

You understand him the same way I do. He is, and always has been, stoutly loyal to Garrison, and as I was aware even back then, a responsible sift for some of the fantasies that came in, such as Joesten, et als., who were crazy. I am glad, too, that you like him and respect him, as I also do. The innocent explanation, that he simply got busy and forgot to call back, might work, except that it does not account for your several letters.

I know that I wrote several letters after I left the office in August 1968, and all, except one to Ivon, went unanswered, and one was returned because it had 4¢ postage due. It could be that they are just poor letter writers, but that explanation, too, is insufficient. Especially since you are trying to help them.

The conclusion I arrive at, in trying to make some sense out of it, is this. Ivon takes his orders from Garrison, and does little of major importance without his approval, which is as it should be. Garrison, for reasons I've never adequately figured out, has the oddest way of dropping out of pocket at the most untimely moments. When I worked there, he could be in his office one moment, and out the next, before even his own staff could turn around. I can remember one occasion vividly wherein I was about to be admitted into the sanctum sanctorum, when lickety-split, he vanished with a wave of the magic wand. How, to this day, I do not imagine. Nothing was more frustrating. And even his own aides, ~~xxxxx~~ like Ivon, Boxley, and Bertel, had a strange hesitation about bothering him at home.

I never quite figured out why, and have, like you, wasted little time trying to put together a puzzle with over half the pieces missing. It's like playing solitaire with half the red cards gone. Anyway, my guess is that Garrison has been unavailable recently, and that Ivon has not had the opportunity to bring it up. Or, more likely, he did bring it up, and Garrison said he'd think it over, and just never got back to it. Does that begin to make sense?

Other explanations, less likely, are that he asked a sec to do it, and she forgot. Or that he did mail them, and they got lost by our new efficient postal service, worse than the one it replaced. But until we are together again, it will be impossible to get to the straight of things. I realize that there are alot of things we cannot begin to discuss in letters, that we need to sit down and have a nice, long talk.

In any case, I detected none of the sentiment toward you or me, that we had expected. I asked him more about myself than I did about you, but in both cases, he indicated nothing of the nature you have expressed. At least, he didn't outwardly. And he may have decided to wait until Garrison gets back before acting on it. J.G. is in Laurel, Miss., with his mother, who recently had a heart attack, Lou said, a fact I had not heard about. (I don't get the N.O. papers.)

After Ivon said he had already sent you everything he had, that completely took the wind out of my sails, and I decided that maybe he had sent the rest of it since we had last communicated, and since I didn't know for sure what it was, I didn't press that matter. I did go on to discuss other things I had on my mind while I was there.

The first was in regards to Tom Bethell. I had started to mention when we were there that we had seen Tom, as I think I told you, but hesitated because we were pressed for time, and the phone was ringing so often, as you remember. I also guessed that it might be still a sore subject, which it is. But this time I brought it up. He was pleasant about it, and when I pressed him, he assured me that he never thought I had had anything to do with Tom, although I did happen to be working in his office, and under his unenthused direction. I reminded him that I had written them many letters about Tom's strange boredom, etc. Later on he said, "Jim, and Harold Weisberg and I all had confidence in you." It particularly struck me that he put your name between his and Garrison's. May be a minor point, as it is correct grammatically to put "I" last in a series, but he did seem to include you as one of the main men. Also in there Bill Boxley's name came up again, as it naturally should in that context. I told him you had enlightened me about alot of things that went on,

and that it seemed there were a lot of people who came in, and seemed as if their sole purpose was to torpedo the investigation. He pressed his lips together, nodded his head, and said cryptically, "Many." I said from what you had told me about Boxley, I had trouble keeping touch with reality. He replied, "Well you can't imagine what it was like for us here, Jim." He also said that he still thought Boxley was working for the government, which was the only thing they could make any sense out of.

When I asked him what I could do to help, he said they would need me about the middle of the month to help with advertising for the S.C. campaign, and if I have the time, I will get back in touch then. It depends on the situation and my attitude then. I also can't figure him running for the Supreme Court. It is not a position of power, as you say, and less glamorous. But something Louis said struck me: "Jim is fighting for his future." No doubt that in spite of his outward strength, saying it's an honor to be indicted by the gov't which suppressed the truth about JFK's murder, this has had a devastating effect on him, and his family has suffered, I am sure. My guess is that he wants to settle down and grapple with the problems of the law, as all lawyers do, and get out of the frantic pace. I would rather see him run for the U.S. Senate, where he would be in a more effective position, but there are probably many things of which we are both unaware. His political influence may also have diminished somewhat, when McKeithen went out, as evidenced by Alcock's defeat at the polls.

I am not recounting my conversation with Ivon in sequence.

One of the main things we talked about, which I save here for the last, is "Pandora's BOX." During the Federal hearings early last year, Garrison stated that he intended to publish the results of his investigation in voluminous form. I asked Ivon about this, and asked if might be the one to compile it, since they know me and I know the case, and would work on nothing else. He was very amenable to that suggestion, said they'd be glad to have me do it, but that J.G. had recently told Lou it'd be at least six months before they could get around to it. The campaign recently, plus Garrison's illness in the past have held it up, and the civil suit by Shaw. The latter will be over in 6 months, Ivon said. But they had discussed it recently and J.G. told him that it was definitely his intention to do that. So when I see them again in mid-Sept., I will ask again about the Gervais transcripts, and about this, and will let you know. If I do start working there full-time, I would, of course, see to it that you would get copies of everything you wanted, promptly. Perhaps you could come down then, though I hope it will also be before.

Lastly, one thing that has been strongly on my mind, prior to this, is an idea I have been mulling over for a long time, and that is the possibility of trying to write a long account of the "Garrison probe", in either long article or book form. There is much that the

public would still like to know, and does not understand to date. In 1969, after I had left the office, and after the debacled trial, I had attempted to write a book, which soon wasted away, for reasons we have discussed many times. I still have much original work left from this, though, and my interest in the project has recently been rekindled, and I was wondering how you would feel about the idea offhand. I would, of course, do absolutely nothing about this without your express approval and knowledge, because your trust has been placed in me. The idea, though, continues to intrigue me, and when we have adequate chance, I want to discuss this with you at length. Since you have been the major source of my understanding about much that I witnessed and did not understand at the time, it is essential that before considering the idea too seriously, that we discuss it thoroughly, as I have come to trust your judgment as being the most rational and reasonable.

I have also come to be concerned that after all these years, you have been the one person who has, in my estimation, worked harder to get the truth out about the ~~murders~~ assassinations, than almost all the others combined. And proportionally you have received the least amount of credit deserved. I have felt this way for a long time now, and have not been able to say it the way I've wanted to, without sounding insufferably corny. I have understood all along about the publicity angles. Your books were the most rational, painstaking in detail, but not, unlike most, sensationally written and covered, nor suspensefully carried, as others which make good reading for the commode. (The best place to read in my estimation). Others, like Norden, Josiah Thompson, Flammonde (by the way, why do you call him a whore I meant to ask you, because he's so fucked up?) and others on and on, who literally stole what you took years to dig out with hard, hard work, and they grabbed the spotlight, not just from you, but from all the honest, decent, hard-working people way in the background that never got credit, and wanted none, but who did hope in vain for the truth about who killed our heroes, and why, and how to stop it from happening again. I do fear for McGovern, if he takes a rise in the polls, for example, or if by some miracle, he should get elected. I am not naive in this respect, either; McG, just like JFK, MLK, RFK, all had shortcomings. None are perfect, and they were as vain as the rest, only just a little more decent and a bit more idealistic, as we would all hope to be. I hope I have come close to saying what I mean, and you get the message I'm trying hard to convey.

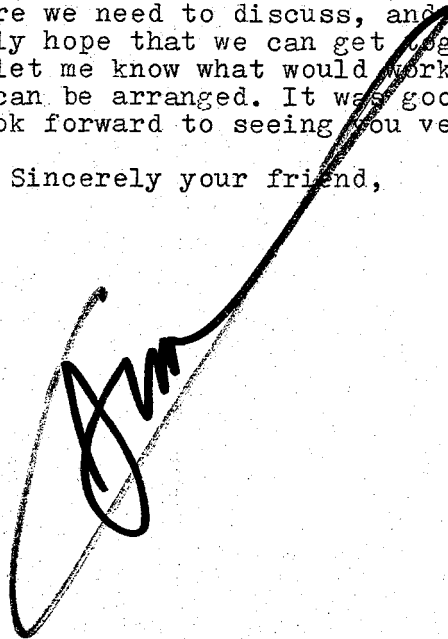
This is anti-climactic, but I have been meaning to ask you in this same regard how you feel about the latest analysis of the autopsy by Dr. Wecht. As an expert on the autopsy (Bud gave me a copy of the summary pleadings before Judge Halleck), you would know best. It sounded good to me, especially his intention to assemble a panel of experts.

Yet, though this latter proposal appeals to me, I feel, as I've felt for a long time, that proving there were several assassins

is not enough. This is a basically accepted fact among the people. What is needed, in my estimation, is a new investigation, that will expose all of the facts about the organization, be it the Mafia, the KKK, the CIA, whatever, that has been responsible for the recent murders. One proposal, which I am trying to make through the McGovern organization, is a permanent committee with governmental authority, unlike the Warren Comm., to investigate (with its own staff, not CIA'S and FBI) and make recommendations of individuals who planned, paid for, and carried out the domestic political assassinations in this country, to be prosecuted on Federal charges.

There is so much more we need to discuss, and a letter cannot be adequate. I sincerely hope that we can get together very soon, my good friend; please let me know what would work best, and that we shall do, as soon as can be arranged. It was good to hear from you again, and I will look forward to seeing you very soon.

Sincerely your friend,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over the closing line of the letter. The signature is cursive and appears to be a first name followed by a surname, though the exact details are obscured by the style of the writing.